

THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE
ASSOCIATION OF ASSISTANT LIBRARIANS

(*Section of the Library Association*)

VOL. XLII

MARCH—APRIL, 1949

No. 2

HON. EDITOR : J. F. W. BRYON

Beckenham Public Libraries

Editorial

PROSPECTIVE contributors to this journal may welcome some notes for guidance, both as to the kind of material that is required and the form in which it should be presented.

Articles on any subject concerned with librarianship will be considered, but they will have a better chance of inclusion if they are short, pointed and provocative of thought. If originally delivered as papers to meetings of the Association, they should be trimmed of the colloquial asides, introductory remarks and repetitions necessary in spoken delivery. Original ideas are particularly welcome, as are vigorously stated views on controversial matters.

Contributions should be typed and double-spaced : the printer requires his copy in this form, and the Hon. Editor has no time for typing others' MSS. Anonymous contributions cannot be accepted.

* * *

The Library Assistant. Index to Vol. XLI, 1948.

The index to the 1948 volume is sent to subscribers with this issue. Members may obtain a copy in return for a stamped addressed envelope, sent to the Hon. Joint Education Secretaries, A.A.L., Carnegie Library, Herne Hill Road, London, S.E.24.

CORRECTION

It is regretted that in the January—February issue the closing date for applications for Correspondence Courses was incorrectly given ; it should have read 28th February, and *not* 20th March.

STOP PRESS

Please note the new address of the Hon. Secretary on page v. Members will have heard with pleasure of Mr. Clough's appointment as Deputy Librarian at Brighton.

THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

ASSOCIATION OF ASSISTANT LIBRARIANS

(Section of the Library Association)

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 1949

Preliminary Notice

The 1949 Annual General Meeting will be held at Stratford upon Avon on Wednesday, 6th July, 1949. It is hoped to publish full details of the programme in the May-June issue.

Notices of motion for this meeting must be submitted in writing to reach me within twelve days of the publication of this notice.

E. A. CLOUGH,
Honorary Secretary.

Public Library,
Brighton, 1.

Council Notes

THE President (W. Pearson, Esq.) was in the Chair for the first meeting of the fifty-fourth session of the Council and twenty-six members of the Council, together with the Honorary Officers, attended.

It was reported that the President had been elected as a Country Councillor of the Library Association and that the Vice-President (F. C. Tighe, Esq.) and the Honorary Secretary would represent the A.A.L. on the Library Association Council.

Mr. and Mrs. S. W. Martin were elected Honorary Education Secretaries, Mr. H. C. Twatts was elected Honorary Librarian, Mr. W. F. Broome was elected Honorary Membership Secretary and Mr. G. P. Rye was elected Honorary Assistant Editor. These officers of the Council carry out a large part of the work demanded by a large Association and the Council expressed your indebtedness to them. Mr. R. F. Drewery, last year's Chairman of the Press and Publications Committee, was elected Chairman of the Council.

The Press and Publications Committee elected Mr. R. Helliwell to the Chair and considered the publication and selling price of the various publications which have just been reprinted. The Education and Library Committee, with Mr. Corbett in the Chair, considered the routine business of administering correspondence courses including the reorganization necessitated by the new Library Association syllabus; they also received many reports of day and week-end courses held by the various Divisions. Arising out of a motion from the Yorkshire Division it was resolved that the Library Association be asked to rescind that section of the 1946 syllabus requiring an essay to be submitted with effect from the introduction of the new syllabus in 1950. The Finance and General Purposes Committee appointed Mr. J. Bebbington Chairman and considered the Honorary Treasurer's statement of Income and Expenditure for 1948; they received the Honorary Membership Secretary's report that membership

THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

was expected to reach 4,500 for the year 1948 and the Committee congratulated him on his work during the year ; *they emphasized that the Association's future depends on each member opting for the A.A.L. when they return the Library Association subscription form.*

The Council approved the work of the Committees and went on to co-opt Mr. A. Ll. Carver to the Council as National Councillor. They considered the existing relationship between the L.A. and the A.A.L., and then decided to set up a Committee of the Council to consider the role of the Association in the Centenary of Public Libraries next year. Finally, they agreed with the Committee of the Midland Division that the Library Association be asked to organize interchange of (a) librarians and assistants on an international basis and (b) assistants working in the United Kingdom in different types of libraries.

With the Inaugural Meeting arranged for the same evening, members of the Council left for a hurried tea after six hours of Committee and Council proceedings.

E. A. C.

Inaugural Meeting, 1949

IT was a pleasure to see such a large audience at Chaucer House for the Inaugural Meeting on 20th January, 1949, and, among the two hundred members, many old friends, including three Past Presidents of the Association, and many new members present for the first time.

The President opened the proceedings by welcoming Mr. Welsford (representing the Library Association) and by reading a letter from the President of the Library Association wishing the Association a successful year.

Mr. A. Ll. Carver and Mr. S. W. Martin were presented with certificates of Honorary Fellowship and the President paid his tribute to these two men who have done so much for the A.A.L.

Mr. Robert Gibbings is best known for his carefully illustrated and delightfully written travel books. In introducing Mr. Gibbings the President explained that he had an additional claim to librarians' esteem, as for many years he had been a director of the Golden Cockerel Press, and a lecturer in Book Production at Reading University. Mr. Gibbings' latest travels had taken him to the South Seas ; it was this visit which provided the material for his lecture, which was admirably illustrated by slides made from his own drawings and photographs. For an hour he talked of life on the Pacific Islands, giving a vivid and realistic picture, quite different from the glamour, the straw skirts and ukuleles which are Hollywood's portrayal of life in the South Sea Islands.

E. A. C.

The Future of British Public Libraries

P. S. BALDWIN

THE Public Library, as it nears the end of the first century of its existence, has become well established as a social and educational factor in the life of the nation. Having achieved acceptance, and having in so doing passed through many stages of experiment, encouragement, set-back and expansion, the next stage is almost certainly going to be a definitive one. Enough has been done to foreshadow the potential of the public library service : the field within which that service can most

THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

effectively operate must now be delimited, its function restated, and its organic basis reviewed.

First, as to function. The necessity of a definitive stage in expressing the function of the public library is evident in the many statements of public library purpose which may be found in professional literature. Not all would agree with one of the more recent pronouncements that at the moment public librarianship is hell-bent down the broader road to destruction, having turned aside from the narrow way "of the bookman and the bibliophile." But probably all will agree that Mr. Holliday has rightly shown the point at which a decision must be taken. The Library Association Council *Proposals* of 1943 state, "It is the function of the public library to supply books." Books, however, are avenues to so many activities that it is necessary to insist that they are the true centre of the library service, and not the excuse for other activities. The lecture, for example, must have its origin in books, and not be held because some few listeners may be led to seek books on its subject. 'Birds of the British Isles' may indeed lead the interested to Witherby or Coward; such a lecture may even be held in the library lecture room; but it is outside the scope of the librarian and his committee to promote it. The scope of books is as wide as the frontiers of knowledge, but the scope of the library service is limited to books. The organisation of knowledge as contained in books, the making of that knowledge readily available, the relative value of its various sources in books, the selection of books as supplying the knowledge nearest local needs, these are the normal legitimate activities of a library service functioning at its centre, and not strayed to its circumference. Thus, in relation to general cultural activities, the function of the public library must be firmly stated.

Delimitation of the field in relation to education is also necessary. The public library has a relationship with both schools and adult education: in each of these spheres contemporary movements make more urgent the need to state clearly the function of the public library. The 1944 Education Act gives authority for the provision of libraries in schools, and insists on facilities being available for further education after leaving school. With suitably equipped library rooms, a librarian as organiser of school and other library work with children, and a teacher-librarian in each school, a new degree of continuity and cohesion between school and public library may be achieved. In relation to adult education, a warning may be taken from Mr. McColvin's report on American Public Libraries which points out how their emphasis on educational purpose has given a rather restricted public view of their usefulness. However, in the supply of books, information and advice about books, accommodation for, and talks or films on, books, the place of the public library in adult education can be affirmed.

Definition of function applies also to relations in commercial, technical, and other specialist fields. Delimitation is necessary here between the spheres of public libraries and special libraries. Local conditions are very cogent factors, since, although the public library must be a general library because of its accessibility to all, it has a right and duty to specialise according to local needs. Its specialisation, however, will not be carried to the degree required by specialist institutions and firm libraries, unless it is by local necessity and agreement encouraged to do so. Generally, its usefulness will exist in its inclusiveness, as being complementary to the concentration of the specialist library; in its service to the student and the apprentice; and in its capacity for co-ordination and providing a point of contact with other sources.

The administrative areas best suited to public library systems also require definition. An impetus towards decision in this matter has come from the reports of the Local Government Boundary Commission. For better or for worse the Public Library

THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

was established as a department of Local Government and thus shares the fortunes of local administration generally. Whatever new areas, therefore, are adopted as a result of the Boundary Commission's investigations, these are most likely to be areas of control by a single library authority. The Commission recommends the creation, or perpetuation, of county boroughs with a population of 60,000-200,000 (although Manchester and Liverpool will retain their present status), one tier counties of 200,000-500,000, for example Leeds, and two-tier counties of 500,000-1,000,000, mainly the existing counties. Unless, therefore, *ad hoc* authorities, or joint committees are set up, these will be the library areas of the future. In the opinion of many administrators of experience, control is better left in the hands of the all- or most-purpose authority, and there seems to be no reason why the minimum area with 60,000 population should not support an efficient library service. Indeed, somewhere about 60,000 is the optimum population a single library can serve, so that in the larger areas more service points are demanded serving populations not very different from those of the smallest of the new county boroughs. The advantage from the greater resources of the larger area is, of course, a much more exhaustively stocked central reference library. The small town, however, need not suffer a handicap in this respect if a system of regional reference libraries is established. Mr. A. Shaw Wright has described how no town need be more than thirty or forty miles from such a centre, and such regional reference libraries are also envisaged in the Library Association Council's *Proposals* of 1943. Since their function is so much wider than that of the authority in whose area they exist, they should, of course, be supported by additional means. And since they would perform a national service, generous grants from the Exchequer may be hoped for. This question of Exchequer grants is one which concerns not only the establishment of regional reference libraries, but public library finance generally, and it is a part of the question of the setting-up of a Government department with responsibility for the national library service.

In considering this question it may be noted that control of local services by departments of the central government is already very great. "It is true," Professor Jennings has said, "that we have elected local authorities exercising a discretion according to the opinions which meet the approval of their own electorate. It is true also that they can do a great deal, within their powers, to improve the health and happiness of their constituents. But they are rigidly restricted to the powers conferred upon them by Parliament . . . and above all they are controlled more or less closely in all their activities by organs of the Central Government." Professor Jennings reviews the increasing powers of the Ministries of Education, of Health, and of Transport, and prophesies: "Perhaps the time is not far distant when a single Ministry for the Social Services will control through Parliamentary Secretaries all the services of local government except, possibly, highways and agriculture. 'Central control' must thus involve, not a meticulous investigation of the details of local administration, but a general control in the national interest of divergent or contradictory local policies." Such a Ministry would almost certainly include the public library service, but its appearance is probably more remote than Professor Jennings, writing in 1935, foresaw. A more immediate prospect is contained in the Library Association Council's *Proposals* for a central government department which would co-ordinate and support local endeavours. The Conference of 1946, moreover, rejected the idea of a Ministry of cultural activities and relations, recommending that the Ministry of Education should assume responsibility, with the firm proviso that a library department should be established. This, in fact, seems to be the most likely development, and would put into effect an idea current

THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

from the very beginning of the public library movement. Edward Edwards and Thomas Greenwood both proposed a Government department responsible for libraries, and the idea was also approved by the Conference of 1904, and by the Adult Education Committee appointed in 1917. Such a Government department would, of course, combine the powers in respect of libraries now exercised by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education, and those of the Treasury in respect of the National libraries. It would have the power to make grants-in-aid, and would carry out inspection in a similar way to the inspection of schools. The regional reference libraries, and the National Central Library would be maintained by it, and also "such projects as central cataloguing and schools for the training of librarians."

Quis Custodiet Ipsos Custodes?

"HOW is it that Chief Librarians (as a class) are always five years behind the times? I have noticed it in conversations during the last few months. Some of them are beginning to realize that Jack Priestley is a playwright, but have not yet heard of Tennessee Williams. They can just see Bartok and Vaughan Williams, but wot not of Finzi, Messiaen or Samuel Barber. They have heard of Hemingway, but not of Truman Capote, of Auden (only just), but not of Roy Fuller or Terence Tiller. To take it to a lower plane, they know of Duke Ellington, but haven't heard of Dizzy Gillespie. The instances can be multiplied. The eager junior goes home with a William Sansom, the chief with a C. S. Forester."

The above passage occurred in a recent letter from a chief librarian, who suggested that the matter was one which called for comment. That he was right, many an assistant will testify. At the time that he wrote, the argument over the Chantrey Bequest pictures exhibition was filling space in the London press, and the thought occurred that here was a parallel case. To the Academician, no artist, save another Academician, could be considered worthy of representation in public collections until he was dead, and dead, preferably, for a considerable number of years. To many critics (and librarians) a contemporary author, composer or dramatist is in a similar position.

It has been interesting to read the recent eulogies of the novels of the late F. Scott Fitzgerald, and to compare them with the comments of critics when they first appeared. One has noticed, too, the way in which the second novel of an author is nearly always dubbed "disappointing," and compared unfavourably with his first. Even though the latter may have been condemned outright on appearance, when its successor is published the first will be remembered to have had "promise which has not been fulfilled." There are logical, valid reasons for this, though they do not account for the almost automatic reaction of some critics. What is not so justifiable is the reluctance of some librarians to buy novels by new writers, no matter how well reviewed, if they are not so well advertised as to become best-sellers. This timid attitude has been excused on the grounds that there is "no demand." In reply, one would ask, "how can readers come to enjoy a book which they have no opportunity of sampling?" Are librarians to lead taste, or follow the advertiser? We stand *in loco parentis* in this; if reputable critics praise a book, then it is our duty to consider it for the public shelves, and to ask if we do not have a duty to counterbalance the effects of high-pressure salesmanship.

The only other reason that may be adduced for librarians' diffidence toward con-

THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

temporaries is ignorance. What do librarians read? Do they read? There is another stock reply to this—lack of time. "Much as I should like to, my commitments . . ." Yet one knows a chief librarian, active in local cultural work and in professional affairs, who claims to read at least six books a week.

Our correspondent hinted at the answer in his reference to the comparative reading of chiefs and junior assistants. No doubt the position was similar when present chiefs were juniors? There is evident a tendency to regard everything published after the last examination has been passed as 'new fangled,' 'modern' (a term of abuse, this, to some), and therefore not worth consideration. Even some progressive librarians admit to a gradual appreciative hardening of the arteries, a crystallization of taste during their formative period, after which few new styles of writing become acceptable. And if it is true of literature, how much more the case in the other arts! Even in professional matters one has heard a librarian, himself a classer of books for some years, say of the Bliss Classification, "Oh, that was published after my time," in a way which claimed absolution on these grounds from obligation to know anything of that practical scheme.

Is any scapegoat necessary, and if so, what is it? It is surely advisable to lay blame at some specific door, in order that the present lamentable state of affairs may be remedied, and so that the error may be avoided in future. And first among the list of suspects must be the professional training syllabus of early days. Not that the present curriculum is free from fault: the feats of memory expected of the candidate in Registration cataloguing have been better qualification for a music-hall artist than for a librarian. Early examinations will be found to have stressed ability to remember facts rather than evidence of "mature judgement," as is expected to-day. A comparison might be drawn between the early Library Association syllabi and those of the old elementary schools, which dismissed the scholar at an immature age, without having awakened in him any desire for further knowledge: fact-cramming is always dropped as soon as possible.

The Associateship and Fellowship of the Library Association, it is realized by many librarians (one has no evidence of the proportion), are but the first steps in a process of qualification which is never complete. Laurels are too prone to wither to make satisfactory pillows. The long-term remedy for the situation is University-standard education for all professional assistants at full-time library schools, leaving the qualified librarian with an appetite for more—the present aim of the Library Association.

What is the short-term answer? A clue may be found in the Army's system of short, intensive courses. No one pretended that an officer, commissioned or not, trained two or three years previously, was as widely knowledgeable in his job as when first trained, despite the full-scale distribution of training pamphlets. In addition, new weapons, tactics, methods, were evolved on both sides, and had to be notified to all concerned. So one found men of all ranks sent on courses to acquire special training for a limited period. Instructions and the like, it was realized, were not a guarantee of sufficient knowledge and understanding among all the men affected by policy changes or the introduction of revised procedures. It is suggested, similarly, that it should be admitted that conferences, meetings and periodical articles are not in themselves enough to ensure the adequate dissemination of new ideas, or the wide understanding of new techniques. The quotation beginning this article instances some obvious subjects for such courses; librarians should be glad to release senior assistants to attend brief courses in contemporary literature, music, art and architecture, with emphasis on the bibliography of each. Similarly, it should be possible to arrange for a series of lectures

THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

on the bibliography of all the main Dewey heads, given by specialists, not necessarily in the profession.

There would then be an opportunity for librarians trained under earlier conditions to bring themselves up to date in these and other matters. How many assistants, for example, are qualified to handle films, gramophone records, microfilm and photostat? Some chief librarians might welcome instruction in the new techniques.

There would be difficulties, of course. The better the idea, the more the problems that arise. Finance would be one; but if authorities are willing to pay the expenses of two delegates to the Annual Conference, they should find as good value in short, practical training for their staff. Where could courses be held? The present library school premises might be available during vacations, at the start: alternatively, the larger metropolitan libraries could probably accommodate study groups of a limited size for a short session, and provide specialist lecturers in many subjects which were once the prerogative of larger authorities alone, but increasingly are coming within the scope of smaller services. Who would organize the courses? Many bodies might be invited to co-operate: the library offering hospitality, the university and special librarians of the region, the nearest library school, together with the local L.A. Branch and A.A.L. Division, might divide the subjects among them on an agreed basis. These are short answers to long questions, it is realized. But it is hoped that the presentation of the need will arouse sufficient interest to enable a practical scheme to be worked out. Once the principle has been accepted, argument may be profitable on the details of procedure.

J. F. W. B.

Correspondence

FILM OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Mr. W. F. Broome, F.L.A., Librarian-in-charge, Central Lending Department, Lambeth Public Libraries, writes:

"I am considering making a film of the public library service in Great Britain. To do this I should like to get into touch with other members who have 16-mm. cine-cameras and who would be willing to co-operate with me in shooting film. Film stock would be supplied by me; exposure would be to a prepared script, and returned for editing. I shall be grateful if all interested members who can help will write to me before the end of March."

SCHOOLS OF LIBRARIANSHIP

Mr. J. L. Ingham, F.L.A., Lecturer in Librarianship, Municipal College of Commerce, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, writes:

"It is to be hoped that your readers will not take the advice of the unnamed correspondent quoted by Dr. Walford in his article on "Students' Problems" in the January-February number of *The Library Assistant*. The Schools of Librarianship would find it most inconvenient to be inundated with requests for "provisional" places, requests which might later be withdrawn. Such withdrawals have caused much trouble and led to some schools functioning with courses below minimum strength, simply because it was too late to fill the places left empty. Surely it is essential that a student should take the elementary step of finding out whether his chief would be able to grant him leave of absence before he writes to a school."

THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

LIBRARY ASSOCIATION EXAMINATIONS

Mr. E. O. Reed, F.L.A., Borough Librarian, Chelmsford, writes :

" Doubtless many of your readers will not let Dr. Walford's statement about the Registration Examination go unchallenged. It is not, of course, true that 'after January, 1951, in all cases the whole examination must be taken at one sitting.' At the 1947 L.A. Conference it was made known that the Education Committee was considering the retention of the present practice of taking the examination in parts beyond 1951, and the details of the revised syllabus given in the November, 1948, *Record*, and the report of the L.A. Council in the January, 1949, *Record*, confirmed that the parts, until further notice, may be taken together or separately in any order."

MIDDLESEX FULL-TIME LIBRARIANSHIP SCHOOL

Mr. J. L. Tomlinson, M.A., M.Com., Head of the Spring Grove Polytechnic, Isleworth, Middlesex, writes :

" In furtherance of many requests from Middlesex students and others from the counties to the west, the possibility of establishing another full-time School under the auspices of the Library Association is being explored.

" Evidently all applicants cannot be accepted in September, 1949, at the existing schools, and if those who are anxious to participate in a whole-time year's course for Registration, Finals, or Special Subjects would write at once to the Spring Grove Polytechnic, Isleworth, it would be very helpful in the formulation of the scheme.

" If students and librarian staffs really wish to have this facility and they express a firm desire, then every effort will be made to meet their professional needs.

" General indications confirm that Public Authorities and Library Chiefs will be prepared to grant financial assistance and release facilities."

" THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT "

Mr. H. Groom, F.L.A., Borough Librarian, Heston and Isleworth, writes :

" I have for disposal, subject to a refund of the postage incurred, the following copies of *The Library Assistant* :

1. Complete sets for the years 1940-2, 1945, and 1947.
2. Incomplete sets and duplicate copies for the years 1932-6 and 1939-46."

Birmingham Summer School, 1949

THE Thirteenth Summer School of Librarianship, arranged by the Library Association in co-operation with the University of Birmingham and the Birmingham Public Libraries Committee, will be held in Birmingham from 11th to 24th September, 1949.

The scheme of studies will be based on the syllabus of the Library Association and will include all the subjects of the Registration Examination and Parts 1, 2, and 3 of the Final Examination.

Students will reside at Chancellor's Hall (a University Hall of Residence), Edgbaston, Birmingham.

A prospectus giving fuller details of the School and including an enrolment form will be published with the March issue of the *Record*.

Enquiries should be addressed to The Honorary Secretary, Library Association Summer School, Public Library, King's Norton, Birmingham, 30.

THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

Students' Problems

A. J. WALFORD

ENTRANCE EXAMINATION

ENTRANCE EXAMINATION : By R. L. Collison

THE papers set this time were fair and generous, their general trend being to test the student's powers of observing and understanding the everyday routine and administration of his own library. In the first paper, in addition to two straightforward questions on library finance, there were two asking for descriptions of the candidate's own library and its routine. But Q.2 : "What steps should be taken to ensure the proper care of books both by staff and readers? What penalties are usual for ill use? Can you suggest any amendment to these?" is one which must have puzzled many students. The inclusion of staff is likely to confuse the general issue, since one would hardly invoke the law or the byelaws in such a case, and it is difficult to imagine any effective amendment beyond an increase in penalties.

The second paper—on Cataloguing and Classification—gives scope in Q.3, which calls for a description of guides to the shelves in a Lending Library, for a discussion of the best types of guides for the fast-moving stock of a modern circulating department. The old type of fixed guide must give place to one of the movable block varieties which takes its place among the books and can be removed or moved along, according to the state of the stock on that particular subject. The wording of the question implies the inclusion of general plans to the shelves and their careful siting. Q.5 asks : "Why might it be useful if all moderate sized, or even small libraries possessed a copy of the Author Catalogue and Subject Index of the London Library?" Here again is good scope for original work on the part of the student, who can point out the invaluable nature of the Catalogue as an aid both in bibliographical research and in the checking of cataloguing details.

The paper on Literature had three very interesting questions : one asked for a description of the layout of the newspaper which the candidate usually read. The next asked for the names of authors (and their works) who are both poets and novelists ; how many mentioned W. J. Turner, Richard Church, Cecil Day Lewis, D. H. Lawrence, George Meredith, James Stephens, or G. K. Chesterton, to name only a few? The last question asked for an account of the candidate's own general reading during the last two years. Since the paper required answers to only three questions, no student should have failed it.

The final paper—on Reference Methods—was more searching and exact. However, none of the questions was beyond the ability of the intelligent assistant, and the last question—which asked : "Certain reference books are extremely useful bibliographically as they help to find more detailed information on specific subjects. Name three and describe the scope and arrangement of one of them," gave the student an excellent chance of showing his familiarity with *Sonnenschein*, the *Statesman's Year Book*, any of the year books of the *Todd Publishing Company*, most of the encyclopaedias, and Robertson's *Courses of Study*, among many others.

REGISTRATION : Classification

Familiar questions formed a notable part of this paper. In Group A (Theory), for example, were revived the criteria for a book classification (Q.2), and the value of mnemonics (Q.3) ; in Group B (Practical), variations in shelf-arrangement suggested in Dewey's Introduction (Q.6), and the rules to be borne in mind when classing books (Q.8). Q.1 was a variation on the theme : Of what value is a systematic classification of books? It required an essay on "The systematic classification of books is largely an outcome of the general adoption of the open access system in public libraries." The four definitions required in Q.4 included, once again, "synthesis." Q.5 rewarded those who read current material on their subject ; S. C. Bradford's *Documentation* and J. D. Stewart's *A tabulation of librarianship* should have been included.

Another question which saw the light of day some time ago was Q.7, suggested by Miss Mann's original example. (It asked the candidate to explain and give examples of books, real or imaginary, at the Dewey numbers 804, 808.4, 808.84, 814, 820.4, 824.) Confusion between the second and third of these numbers must be avoided.

Q.9 did not demand actual classification numbers ; it depended rather on common sense in practical classifying, plus a certain grasp of Merrill's *Code*. Of the five titles, (a) was "A commemorative volume presented to a distinguished university professor." The rule is to class under the main subject, normally the field of research in which the professor specialized.

Q.10 was the only Group B question in which a scheme other than Dewey's could be brought into active play. The Library of Congress schedules are particularly suited to a special classification of English Language and Literature, both for their systematic approach and their wealth of detail.

Not a particularly enterprising paper, but it certainly kept to fundamentals, and no candidate should grumble at that.

THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

REGISTRATION : Cataloguing. By S. J. Butcher

This formidable paper called for initiative, knowledge and judgement on the part of the candidate. Several sections of the syllabus lacked representation, but the wording of the questions gave opportunities both to the resourceful and painstaking student. A personal opinion is that the paper was more difficult than previous tests.

Q.1 was a variation of the familiar " write short notes " type of question, and asked for the significance in cataloguing of ten well-known terms.

Q. 2 gave the candidate the opportunity to get away from text-book opinions and consider the argument that much time and money are wasted in all types of libraries in the compilation of catalogues. It is customary for new beliefs to begin as heresies and to end as superstitions. This one has gravitated to the examination room—a strange setting for a false doctrine. Though it is a good question the wording appears to command the support of the candidate rather than his criticism.

Q. 3 called for a careful description of the types of illustrations that may require separate designation in a catalogue entry. This required clear thinking and good presentation on the part of the candidate. Photographs and portraits are often plates, and a frontispiece may easily consist of a map, a facsimile or a portrait.

Q.4 asked how far the use of references and double entry were necessary in the subject index to the classified catalogue. This was a technical question requiring sound practical experience of the classified catalogue. The entry in the subject index will consist of the term selected to describe the subject and the notation of the classification.

e.g. BEETLES 595.76

To provide for the reader who will look under COLEOPTERA another entry is made :

COLEOPTERA 595.76

This is a form of double entry but it would be a waste of time to make a reference from BEETLES to COLEOPTERA, since the reader must then make a further consultation to trace the class no.

The only legitimate use of the " see " reference in the index would be in the case of a synonymous heading with many sub-divisions. Thus instead of repeating the many sub-divisions under WIRELESS a " see " reference is made : WIRELESS *see* RADIO.

The " see also " reference is only used in the index where a general reference is needed.

e.g. DESCRIPTION AND TRAVEL. *See also* under the names of specific countries.

e.g. WALES—Description and travel.

Correlation of subjects should be confined to the main classified sequence.

Q.5 was a simple practical exercise requiring twenty brief entries, imaginary or real, to illustrate the arrangement of a name catalogue.

Q.6 on the desirability and methods useful in cataloguing fiction in public libraries must have been a popular question with many candidates. It does, however, cover a wide field and a full discussion should consider selective and co-operative cataloguing, forms of catalogues and bibliographical aids. To some extent this and Q.2 involve repetitive answers.

The practical section was more difficult. Q.7 involved " hard writing " and a detailed knowledge of the A.A. code. Q.8 gave the transcript of a lengthy title page and asked for the layout of entries for a dictionary catalogue. A compilation of thirty writers with an editor is confusing and difficult to set out. Although the majority would make the main entry under GRATTAN there is something to be said for joint author entry. It depends, of course, on the work of the editor or compiler. There was little indication of this in the annotation.

Q.9 was a similar test calling for full entries for the classified catalogue. Main entry should have been made under E. T. OWEN, although in view of the meagre information supplied it will not be surprising if many candidates fell into the HOMER trap. Q.10 was the standard requirement of assigning subject headings and necessary references to ten book titles.

[Owing to lack of space, Mr. Butcher's selections have had to be omitted.]

REGISTRATION : Bibliography. By S. J. Butcher

The paper was a searching test for most candidates and called for a detailed knowledge of every part of the syllabus. Several of the questions were " hardy annuals " dressed up in a new guise. The questions were fair and well balanced.

Q.1. The first part, asking for the characteristics of a well-produced illustrated book, is well covered by the standard text-books. The process must be suitable to the work of the artist and in harmony with the physical appearance of the book. The respective merits of monochrome and coloured illustrations for the reproduction of paintings could well have been set as an independent question. Considerations of expense, tone value and re-touching can hardly be examined in the short time available. An important factor is that two of the primary colours cannot be exactly reproduced in the form of printing ink. Therefore, imperfections must be compensated for by special re-touching.

Q.2. Also in two parts. The essential differences between linotype and monotype are known by most candidates. The second part, requiring a statement of the advantages and disadvantages of each,

THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

involves repetitive answers. The difficulty here is one of presentation. Clarity in setting out, preferably in tabular form, is the solution.

Q.3. Main parts of the printing press to be enumerated are the forme, tympan, bed, platen, frisket and carriage. Once again presentation plays an important part and a tabulated statement listing the manner of operation in the platen, flat-bed and rotary press will save time and avoid repetition.

Q.5. The main differences between woodcut and wood engraving have not been clearly defined in some text-books. Also, wood engraving is often used as a generic term to include both processes. Woodcut can be defined as a relief process in which the non-design is cut away. The design prints black and the non-design white. The pattern is cut into the plank surface of soft wood (apple, pear or beech) with a knife. A wood engraving on the other hand is engraved into the end grain of boxwood with gravers and other tools. The design is cut away and the non-design prints black. The advantages of wood as a medium of illustration are dealt with more fully in the standard text-books. Chief points are that wood is comparatively cheap and can be used with type.

Q.6. Asks for the fundamental differences and a description of etching, mezzotint and aquatint. It would be difficult to cover this fully in thirty minutes' writing.

Q.7. Standard question dealing with specifications for a library binding and suitable covering material. This called for practical experience and common sense rather than book knowledge.

Q.8. Another practical question asking for an outline of the procedure in printing a 16-page bulletin. The operative word is "outline" for the student who has been fortunate enough to have compiled a bulletin. Other candidates with a general knowledge of printing procedure should be able to obtain a pass mark.

Q.8. This was a "text-book" question requiring a short note and explanation of the origin of "cancels" "variants" and "imperfections found in modern book production." The first two terms are fully explained in McKerrow while the third is little more than everyday practical experience.

Q.10. The process of collation should be familiar to every candidate who has read the relevant chapters in Esdaile and McKerrow.

REGISTRATION : Assistance to Readers

A paper in which, I imagine, certain questions were avoided like the plague, while others were possibly misunderstood. Such was Q.1. It ran : "Describe the various types of books required by the serious student, and give an example of each in any ONE main field of knowledge." The "various types" are such categories as : elementary ; intermediate ; advanced ; reference (including bibliographies) ; source material. Q.3, requiring authors and titles of ten outstanding works in any ONE special field of knowledge, was generous enough, although it did encourage the erudite answer which might well have left the examiner nonplussed ! Q.8, on bibliographies, was equally generous.

Q.2 was a probing question ; I offer the following :

- (a) wages rates : *Ministry of Labour Gazette*.
- (b) hydroponics : *Agricultural Index*.
- (c) English Christian names : *Oxford Dictionary of Christian Names*.
- (d) purchase tax : *Butterworth's Emergency Legislation*.
- (e) area of Venezuela : *Statesman's Year Book*.
- (f) exports of cars : *Accounts relating to trade and navigation* (monthly).

The male catalogues of the British Museum and the Bibliothèque Nationale, asked for in Q.6, were the B.M. Catalogue (current edition, 1931-), v. 1-42, A-CORB, and the Subject Index (1881-); together with the Catalogue général : *Auteurs* (v. 1-170, A-SERQ).

Both Q.4 and Q.9 required eight essential reference books. For the desk of a "reader's adviser" (Q.9), Whitaker's C.B.L., the C.B.I., Whitaker's *Reference Catalogue*, Baker's *Guide*, Keller's *Reader's Digest* and Dewey are worth a place.

Q.7, on indexes to, and location lists of, periodicals has been set before. *P.A.I.S.* and the *Engineering Index* are two of the best examples of special indexes.

REGISTRATION : History of English Literature

A very fair paper indeed. With the possible exception of Q.10, the questions covered the syllabus adequately. In Q.2 ("Give an account of the best-known prose-writers of the Renaissance period, and their chief works"), care had to be taken to equate the English Renaissance with 1500-1660. One might tabulate the chief prose-writers (including translators) of the age, with their works, and then include their names in a brief survey of the development of prose style ; this last factor is usually overlooked.

Q.6 revolved round a correct definition of "Augustan Age," which is pre-eminently the age of Pope and Addison. Entwistle, however, unhesitatingly includes the Restoration period as well, and one must confess that the examiners have glanced more than once at Entwistle and Gillett in setting this paper. At any rate, it is the Classical Age, in which the heroic couplet was perfected. Of the poets, Dryden (if only as introductory), Pope and Johnson are the most representative.

Q.8 required rather more thought : were the Great Romantics "strenuous individualists" ? The widely contrasted reactions of Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron and Shelley to the doctrines of the French Revolution is an important matter here. They differed, too, in their interpretation of Nature.

THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

Lamb, Hazlitt and De Quincey provide a lively contrast as both essayists and critics ; and there are also Walter Scott and Jane Austen.

With Q.10 one must quarrel, reluctant as one is to do so after the foregoing nine excellent questions. If a question had to be set on the 20th century, why ask for (among three others) the authors of *The Journal of a disappointed man* and *Earlham* ? For those who are still in the dark, the authors are W. N. P. Barbellion and Percy Lubbock respectively. Sampson mentions neither. Do the examiners really consider these books to be "outstanding works" which every candidate with literary pretensions should know ?

REGISTRATION : Library Organization and Administration. By R. G. Brown and B. Bennett

The outstanding feature of this paper was the handsome way in which the specialist candidate was treated. In three questions alternatives were provided, while Q.4 applied to various types of libraries and Q.6 had two alternatives appealing to industrial and institutional library assistants respectively. In this way encouragement being given to the trend towards specialization apparent to-day. At the same time the paper was a fair one for the public library assistant. Some of the questions, particularly QQ.2, 4, 7, 9, and 10, considering the amount of practical experience candidates should have had, required little more than common sense as the basis of the answers.

In Q.2 descriptions with approximate measurements of familiar items of library furniture comprised the answer, and a knowledge of often-seen rules and regulations that to Q.4. In this latter question the words "and other records" should not have been overlooked. They have an important significance in specialist libraries and in some public libraries where gramophone records, illustrations and other material are loaned in addition to books. Q.9 was easy and not up to the standard required for the Registration examination. Q.8 required probably the most thought and analysis of all the questions in the paper. The many difficulties at the N.C.L. include staffing, accommodation and the various and divergent systems of cataloguing in different libraries and types of libraries. At the same time it has no inconsiderable holding of union catalogues already, and its work in this direction should be better known.

Q.1, on the book fund percentage, called for plenty of lively discussion. Does a book fund bear any relation at all to the total required to maintain a large library system ? Although only one-sixth was spent on books it does not logically follow that the book service is inadequate. Careful reading of Q.3 (part 1) would reveal that "arrangement" is the key word. Otherwise it is a straightforward question. Carnell's recent book on Administration covers the ground of issue methods adequately. Q.5 is a specialized question but hospital libraries are definitely in the syllabus, and students who had studied the *Manual of Hospital Libraries* and other set books should have been able to answer it with the help of a little imagination.

Publicity, internal and external, was the scope of Q.6. A study of Savage's *Manual of book classification and display* would furnish the answer to part 1 and could also be adapted by specialists for the alternatives. Q.7, on financing a library, as a lecture to young assistants, would differ for each particular type of library. In any case it should be full of facts and figures and emphasize, as far as the public library is concerned, that it is financed by the public using it. At the same time mention of the financial aid in the past from the benefactors, Carnegie and Passmore Edwards, should be included. Another "lecture" question (Q.10) should have covered the career of librarianship in broad outline and include specialist work and work with young people. The "cons" as well as the "pros" of library work as a career should have been emphasized.

On the whole this paper covered the syllabus adequately and was at the same time fair to the examinees.

FINAL : Bibliography and Book Selection

All the questions were reasonable; for a Final Examination, and there was an element of choice within questions.

Group A had no terrors, and Q.1 was largely evaluative. Q.2 simply asked for definitions of galley-proof, varian and cancel, and for means of detecting cancels.

In Group B the questions were of a type now familiar to candidates. Q.5 required short notes on eight well-known bibliographical tools, while Q.3 merits a detailed answer. I suggest the following as "likely sources of information" :

- (a) Doves Press : Tomkinson's *Select bibliography of the principal modern presses, public and private*.
- (b) Dekker : *Annual bibliography of English language and literature*, 1939.
- (c) "Friar Bacon" : B. M. Catalogue, under "Greene, Robert"; not S. T. C. or Bateson.
- (d) "Monarchy" : Watt, vol. IV (Subjects).
- (e) Cement and concrete : Cement and Concrete Association. *Bibliography*. 1947.

Also Q.5 :

- (a) Economics : *London bibliography of the social sciences* (L. S. E., etc.).
- (b) Cinema : British Film Institute.
- (c) Australia : Royal Empire Society.

THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

- (d) Architecture : R.I.B.A.
- (e) Medicine : Surgeon-General's Office Library.
- (f) Book trade : National Book League, L.S.E. *Catalogue of works on publishing and book-selling*, 1946 ; St. Bride Foundation Catalogue (1919) is under authors only, but a selective list, under topics, has been issued subsequently.

Group C covered new ground in Q.6, on United Nations publications. This was clearly a question for those who frequently handle U.N.O. material and are familiar with the U.N. Library Catalogue (1947) Q.8 appealed, no doubt, to those who have read Margaret Hutchins' excellent *Introduction to reference work*. The question called not only for a mention of the leading published indexes to periodicals but also to the current card-indexing of the periodicals taken in one's own library. Q.10 revived a perennial topic —revision of stock—under a light camouflage. In Q.9 our examiners took to star-gazing, for who is yet familiar with a 15th edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*? There is, of course, the 1947 printing of the 14th edition, and we are assured that "revisions are made with each printing," but no 15th edition has yet come our way.

FINAL : Library Organization and General Librarianship. By F. N. McDonald.

This was an interesting paper, giving opportunities for the display of originality. The questions were fairly general in scope, inasmuch as most of them could be answered from the point of view of special, university or public libraries, and this, I imagine, will make it hard for the examiners to adopt fixed standards in marking. Very few questions had just one answer and the answers given will probably be assessed as much upon the cogency of the arguments as upon the facts supporting them.

Q.1, assuming an adequate grant and three months' leave, asked what four libraries outside U.K. you would choose to visit and why. The answers can be found in Esdaile's *Great Libraries*, to mention no other source. One of my own choices would be the Enoch Pratt Free Library at Baltimore in order to see subject departmentalization at its best and also with the idea of some week-end yachting on Chesapeake Bay. QQ.2 and 3 dealt with copyright libraries and the work of the information officer. Q.4 asked by whom, in the event of their being made, government grants should be administered and what conditions should be attached to them. One answer is to be found in McColvin's *Report* and another in Irwin's *National Library Service*. The main condition of a grant should be the maintenance by the applying authorities of certain standards of service and a guarantee that the grant would be used for improvements, which means, of course, an inspectorate. Public libraries should not be too closely allied to formal education ; nevertheless, it is probable that the inspectorate would be set up by the Ministry of Education.

Q.5 required the description of one library dealing with each of three subjects chosen from a list of eight ; not a particularly easy question, but the opening of the Central Music Library at Westminster, being fresh in the mind, should have made one of the subjects an easy choice.

Q.6 quoted a derogatory remark about vertical files and asked for a discussion. Vertical files can be used for a variety of purposes, the most usual, perhaps, being for correspondence, for cuttings, extracts, and pamphlets, arranged for rapid information, and for the illustrations collection. It depends for its efficiency on a good scheme of classification. In inexpert hands it can be a menace ; scarcely anything can be found without a prolonged search. Clear rules must be adopted for filing documents or prints dealing with more than one subject. Whatever its drawbacks, however, the vertical file is the best and cheapest method of arranging a collection of papers so that easy and quick reference is possible.

Q.7 dealt with photographic and microphotographic means of production and their value to authorities serving populations of less than 400,000. To such authorities these means of reproduction are only of potential value at the moment ; copying can be done when required by larger libraries having the apparatus. Viewers will become more valuable when microfilms and microcards are more plentiful and the same viewers can be used for both.

Q.8 dealt with the framing of interviews to assess qualities other than those revealed by academic or professional qualifications in making junior and senior appointments. Home binderies were the subject of Q.9 and it will be easier to answer after Mr. Cranshaw has given his paper to the L.A. Conference at Eastbourne.

The last question was an incursion into library history. "What significance had five of the following in the cause of libraries?" The list included Colonel Sibthorp who, if I remember rightly, hated reading while at Oxford and hadn't read a book since. I should say he was a great nuisance to the promoters of the 1850 Bill, but was of no significance.

FINAL : Library Routine and Administration. (a) Public Libraries. By F. N. McDonald

The general impression seems to be that this was the most reasonable paper set for some time. There were no impossible questions : the syllabus was covered fairly and there was a nice blend of questions calling for fact and opinion. It should serve its purpose well, namely to test potential chief librarians.

Group A contained three questions on the history and development of public libraries in Australia, the legal position and arguments for and against the delegation of library powers to Education Committees, and the L.A. *Proposals*.

Group B also contained three questions on the organization of central departments for the selection

THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

and purchase of books, on furniture and fittings for a branch library, and on the merits and demerits of various types of catalogues for a children's department.

Group C, two questions, dealt with Readers' Advisers and travelling libraries. In considering travelling libraries it is well to remember that the problems of a rural area differ in many respects from those of an urban area. Many urban areas are now developing a travelling library service in order to counter to some extent the difficulty in securing proper premises, but a travelling library is not effective in a place where a branch is needed. It is ideally suited for serving a pocket of about 5,000 population. If the population is much more than this the use made of the service becomes embarrassing. Not more than a dozen or so people can enter it at one time and the staff have great difficulty in issuing more than sixty books an hour. It does, however, give a far better choice of books than a small shop library and is more economical of staff and overhead expenses than a series of sub-branches.

Group D contained two statements put up for discussion. The first was "The proportionate cost of a library service does not fall as the size of the local authority increases." This statement is borne out by an examination of current library reports. In fact it is difficult to draw any conclusions at all from the summaries of library statistics published in the *Record*; expenditure per head varies in the different population groups for no apparent reason. It would appear, however, on comparing issues, expenditure on books and total expenditure per head of the population that the smaller libraries serving between 30,000 and 50,000 population are the most efficient, though one realizes that there cannot be a first-rate reference library in such communities.

The second statement was, "Library expenditure on salaries and wages must be considered as an undesirable overhead charge which should be kept as small as possible." This is an exaggeration, but it has a germ of truth. There should always be enough staff to give personal service to readers and salaries should be high enough to attract the best qualified. Staff engaged on repetitive routine duties are, however, a different matter and every consideration should be given to mechanical and other means for reducing their number.

On the Editor's Table

AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION. *The Public Library plans for the teen age : prepared by the Committee on Post-war Planning of the A.L.A. Division of Libraries for Children and Young People and its section, The Young People's Reading Round Table.* (Chicago, A.L.A., \$1.75.)

This report supplements the material relating to specialized service included in *A National Plan for Public Library Service* reviewed in *The Library Assistant* in Jan.-Feb., 1949. It envisages the establishment of Youth Libraries ranging from special rooms to alcoves in the Adult Department according to the size of the system. Stress is rightly laid on the careful selection of suitable books and it is emphasized that staff specially trained in work with young people be employed either wholly or partly in the department.

If one acknowledges the need for such a service to help bridge the gap from Children's Department to Adult, then there is little in the report with which one will quarrel. The recommendations are arranged concisely and systematically and cover all aspects of the work, with particular mention of numerous "extension" activities. Some of the suggestions have been made before: this must be inevitable in a report of this nature, but some of the details seem superfluous. Discussing equipment, phrases appear of which two are typical—"The librarian never has enough vertical file space" and "Charging counters. The size and layout will depend on the needs of each room." True! But surely factors common to the administration of any kind of library to be found in all general text-books.

Is this department to be a Purgatory between the Junior and the Adult Libraries through which all souls must pass? Or is it to be an optional section of the Adult Department to be used at the whim of the young reader? The report does not state definitely, but the former would seem to be the case for it is suggested that the book vote for the Youth Library be 25 per cent. of the Adult budget. A high figure!

To the report are appended numerous articles outlining schemes already established or hints by Youth Librarians on their work. The final article outlines the result of a questionnaire on young people's work circulated to 177 U.S. Public Libraries. This is most revealing and indicates that, in spite of the ideals advanced in the report and the glowing accounts of the Youth Libraries established in a few places, most American libraries have done little for Youth. This appendix occupies two-thirds of the book—a case of tail wagging dog! As all the articles have appeared in print before an appendicectomy is indicated, especially as close inspection reveals much repetitive detail in eulogy of the same few Youth Libraries, which appear to be Clubs with library facilities available.

The difference in education and psychology of the American teen-ager make it hard to equate the report with British practice. Although the problems of the loss of readers of age group 14-plus is common here too, the limitations of space, staff and money are obvious.

The few British systems that have attempted any service have usually provided only an annexe to the Adult Department. If the stock is selected with an eye to the interests and capacities of the group, and

THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

kept fresh, then there will be a minimum of wastage of young readers. But do we not tend to forget that there are many perfectly natural factors which reduce the reading time of the teen-ager—Youth Club, Evening School, Social Activities and the like? Let us keep the problem in perspective. O. S. T.

JENKINSON, HILARY. *The English archivist: a new profession.* 1948. (H. K. Lewis & Co., 4s.)

This is the reprint of an inaugural lecture for a new course in Archive Administration, delivered at University College, London, in October, 1947, by the Deputy Keeper of the Records. Mr. Jenkinson concentrates on basic facts and career values. He is at pains to define "archives" (preferred to "records" because of its wider denotation) and "documents," their relationship and use. He gives impressive figures to show the incalculable quantity of documents in existence and quotes a conservative estimate which he made some years ago; separate Public Records then numbered not less than thirty million, and Ancient Parish Registers alone totalled 11,000.

The task confronting the student-archivist is clearly and sympathetically drawn. We learn that the archivist must be, in addition to much else, a bookbinder, repairer, photographer; "something of a Fireman; and a little of an Architect, Builder, Chemist, Engineer, Entomologist and Mycologist." Mr. Jenkinson has high ideals for his calling, and this lecture, which is so well worth printing, will surely inspire others to think and do likewise.

A.J.W.

RANGANATHAN, S. R. *Suggestions for the organisation of libraries in India.* 1946. (Madras: Geoffrey Cumberlege, O.U.P., 5s.)

Despite the general nature of its title, this is a book about school libraries. It begins, like most of Dr. Ranganathan's books, with a statement of the fundamentals of our craft, and then proceeds to explain method. It is intended for laymen who must administer libraries and therefore does not permit confusion by offering choice of methods. It sets out to describe what the author considers are the best systems of routine and administration.

Its particular value to the British student lies in the first part, with its implicit philosophy of librarianship, and in the chapter on Colon, which sets out some of the commoner subjects with their Colon numbers and therefore tells more of the application of this scheme than does the chapter we find in most of our text-books.

B. I. P.

ROSSELL, BEATRICE SAWYER. *Working with a legislature.* 1948. (Chicago, A.L.A., \$1.90.)

The assistant who expects an insight into the framing of a Library Bill will be disappointed in this book. It is, however, an admirably concise description of the means whereby a Bill may be steered through the State capitol, and therefore deserves the attention of the English assistant. Miss Rossell touches upon every means of gaining the sympathy of representative and senator. Starved of long over-due Library Acts in these islands, we may regard with justifiable astonishment not only the number of Bills which appear to exist in the States, but also the wealth of vigorous support available from professional and voluntary organizations; a feature of the book is its revelation of the strength of the citizens' library associations, without parallel in this country. The technique outlined in the chapter "Publicity and public relations" is valuable in fields other than that which is the subject of the book.

E. F. F.

WILLIAMS, G. E. *Technical literature, its preparation and presentation.* 1948. (Allen & Unwin, 7s. 6d.)

On first consideration it would appear that the art of writing good technical literature is one which cannot be taught. It is an innate quality which one man possesses and another does not. However, this new attempt to deal with technical writing causes one to wonder whether after all a good scientific writer cannot perhaps be made as well as born. It is addressed primarily to engineers and physicists to assist them in preparing technical papers for publication, but will also help any others who have to write up the results of research, whether for publication or not. It follows the usual pattern of giving advice first on how to collect material, then on how to arrange it, with added notes on style and presentation. The author, who is head of the editorial department of the Institution of Electrical Engineers, has collected his own material extremely well as the book contains reference to nearly every good idea which has ever been expressed on the subject. There is sufficient description of the actual methods of editing, making up, and printing to show the writer why he should follow certain courses of action which might otherwise appear to be merely unreasonable requirements of his editor. This section will interest the librarian.

The author's personal interest in the subject has led him to give an outline of the elementary principles of psychology in the appendix, and to add nine text-books to the bibliography. This section is not too clearly related to the rest of the work. The results derived from a study of psychology may be appropriate to the question of obtaining attention, but for an introduction to the subject one would look elsewhere, and this part could well have been omitted.

While this book will not necessarily make every scientist into a good writer it will help many indifferent writers to avoid the worst errors, and will give guidance especially to those who lack order in their published work.

W. A.